



## **CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT**

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### **MAYOR'S AND COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Report from: Olga Liberchuk

Subject: 2017 Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference Report

Council Agenda: July 10, 2017

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#### Recommendation

Receive this report for information.



#### *FCM 2017 Conference Report*

It was my first time attending FCM and it was a valuable experience to connect with councillors from all over Canada, people from smaller towns to mid sized communities to larger cities. I attended two study tours where we travelled on-site to learn more about each initiative. I also attended a number of workshops where we learned about different topics and where participants got to share the experiences of their communities.

## Good Food Study Tour

On this tour we looked at the role of municipalities in supporting food programs in schools. We looked at Toronto's Student Nutrition Program as an example where the funding for this programs is not 100% municipal, but rather it's a collaborative approach where different levels of government share the cost of the program. Under this model, the City of Toronto contributes 20% of the funding, another 20% is contributed by participants, 20% is contributed through fundraising, 20% is funded by provincial government, and 20% is funded by federal government. In Toronto's experience this type of funding distribution has been the most sustainable and successful in the long term. This program has been going strong for over 20 years and the stats are just as impressive as its longevity, in 2017/2018: 200,00 meals are served per day at 600 schools across the school districts, at the cost of \$1.69 per student per day. Since its inception, teachers noticed positive changes in students' behaviour because students are well nourished before class and a long day of learning.

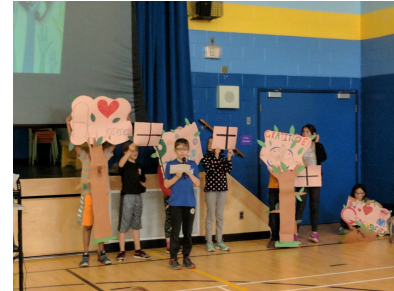
One of our stops was at a vocational high school to see their culinary program. This program was established as a pilot project and was guided by teachers, envisioned by students, and executed by both. They built an aquaponic system to supply the culinary program with organic and locally grown produce, this little farm is located at the school itself and it grows 80 tilapia fish along with a variety of vegetables and herbs that students use to cook for their breakfast program. A few interesting facts about this program:

- Kids are at school at 7am to prepare and serve food to each other before classes begin. This ensures everyone is well nourished and ready for a long day of learning. They prepare and serve all the meals themselves
- Kids also hold annual plant sales to fundraise money for the breakfast program
- The school has no vending machines to discourage and minimize the consumption of highly processed, unhealthy food throughout the day
- Three teachers were sent to the University of Guelph for a course to learn the basics of aquaponics to be able to set up an aquaponic system at their school. They received a \$15,000 provincial fund and another \$18,000 came from alternative sources to train the teachers and build the aquaponic system
- Students also have access to an impressive, commercial size kitchen where they learn and prepare meals





We made another stop at an elementary school where students and teachers operate the Growing Futures program. Under this program students build and operate garden towers as a social enterprise and they learn about food literacy as well as financial literacy. For example, teachers take the opportunity to teach math and science through growing food by calculating seed spacing and teaching about biodiversity when planting different things.



My takeaways from this tour:

- Breakfast programs can increase the demand and supply of locally grown and locally made food, depending on how the program is structured. All of these types of programs have positive impacts on kids who are involved with growing, preparing, and eating locally grown food
- Municipalities can partially support these types of programs through grants to schools or nonprofit organizations that run programs in local schools
- These types of programs are investments in students and future adults, they are not a band aid solutions, so it's important to look at sustainable funding models that will be effective in the long term
- Municipalities can also consider providing seed money if they are unable to support programs over the long term (this is particularly relevant to smaller communities like Esquimalt)
- One big gap that we need to address on the larger scale is the absence of national student nutrition program. Canada is one of the few developed countries that doesn't have such program
- We also need to look at integrating indigenous food strategy into food programs. This can be a great opportunity to work with local first nations to design a curriculum based on indigenous foods

## Main Street Renewal Project

Main Street is a central, high traffic street along the Ottawa canal. It was a part of Ottawa's "complete streets" plan that made this street more accessible and enjoyable to all users, it's a street that's for everyone and for all different modes of transportation: bikes, pedestrians, cars, buses. The cost this renewal project was \$39M and it was rebuilt over two years.



The renewal project resulted in:

- Reduction in the number of car lanes to accommodate for bike lanes, used to be 4 lanes for cars; now it's one car lane each way, 1 bike lane each way, designated left turn lane for cars, designated parking, space for landscaping features, and addition of large scale art installation
- Addition of landscaping included planting 130 new trees to have 30% canopy coverage
- Municipality partnered with BIA for things like hanging baskets and community gardens
- Relocation of all the posts underground, was very expensive but worth it. This gave the ability to widen sidewalks and reduce obstruction for pedestrians along sidewalks
- Improved accessibility along the street by installing a range of ramps and buttons for people with mobility restrictions
- Addition of public art installation at the cost of \$250,000
  - Process followed the existing Public Art Program that has been in existence for 50 years
  - The purpose is to support temporary art exhibitions
  - Funded by 1% of capital projects that are more than \$2M
  - The process for the art installation was 1 year selection, 3 year installation
  - Uses new technology: lit up at night, durable material, low maintenance
  - Supports local artists

Wide Sidewalks and Added Bike Lanes



Art Installation

Inside the Community Garden



New Landscaping



Entrance to Community Garden



3 things that made this renewal project successful:

1. **Working group:** consisted of 80 members of which about 20 were active throughout the whole process. Members were diverse and included residents, businesses, churches
  - The working group looked at and had input on options they wanted the city to do or not to do
  - Businesses along Main St are happy with the addition of bike lanes and larger sidewalks because it makes their street look nicer and makes people want to go there more or stay there longer
2. **Frequent distribution of a construction newsletter to those along Main St:**
  - The purpose was to keep everyone involved and informed
    - Newsletter included things like:
      - What you can expect
      - Relevant facts: did you know section
      - Information about “why we’re doing this”, “why we are working on this corner for so long,” etc
3. **Community staff liaison:** a person businesses and residents could reach easily and raise concerns with throughout the two years of construction

## **FCM Innovation Workshop: Making Choices that Matter to Citizens**

Innovation: “the implementation of a new or improved product (good or service), process, market or organizational method in practices”. Based on this definition we looked at examples of innovation projects or processes that support innovation in cities like Kitchener. We looked at three principles of FCM’s innovation network:

1. The need for solutions to be owned by the government sector
2. Innovation needs to be real and practical
3. Part of something bigger that requires innovation

We broke into smaller groups to share our thoughts around 3 questions:

1. What makes the Canadian context unique for municipal innovation?
2. What are the opportunities for your municipality to innovate?
3. What is the role of municipalities to make this happen? How will you do this?

We concluded the workshop by acknowledging that innovation can happen at any municipality, in large cities as well as in small towns and everything in between. Infrastructure, housing, etc all involve the need for innovation and FCM innovation network provides resources, procurement, knowledge, leadership, and vision to implement municipal programs, policies and processes that support innovation at the local level. This network exists to leverage tech to improve communities.

# Overcoming Barriers Workshop: A Strategy to Elect More Female Local Officials

This workshop was led by Maryam Monsef, the Minister of Status of Women, and we examined the question of gender balance in politics.



We talked about the fact that it's not only important to get women to participate in politics, but that it's equally important to find ways to keep women in politics. When talking about improving gender balance in our local communities we need to ask:

- Do elected officials have family friendly workplaces?
- Is there mat leave to support young women? So far Montreal is the only city that offers mat leave to elected officials
- Are there policies for leave of absence due to elder care?
- FCM has a number of resources available for municipalities to promote gender balance at the local level:

<http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/program-resources.htm>

We also discussed the importance of Chapter 5- Equal Opportunity: Federal Budget 2017's Gender Statement. It states: "Gender-based analysis (GBA) identifies the ways in which public policies affect women and men differently. It does so through a systematic use of data to better tailor the design and delivery of government programs. Recently, this tool has evolved into GBA+ to include the intersecting identity factors that must be considered in public policy along with and in relation to gender (e.g., ethnicity, age, income, sexual orientation)." It is the first time the federal government acknowledged the importance of gender based analysis, and the first time the federal government is actively applying an intersectional lens to all public policy. For more info on Ch 5: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2017/docs/plan/chap-05-en.html>

## The Person's Case and the Famous Five

Under Section 24 of the British North America Act, only "persons" could be appointed to the Senate. Courts at the time did not interpret this clause to include women. In 1927 five Alberta women — Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney and Irene Parby — launched a legal challenge that took them all the way to Canada's highest court of appeal: the Privy Council of England. Its ruling, that "persons" should include females, removed a legal and social barrier to political equality for women.

In conclusion, we need to consider systemic barriers that limit or prevent women from running and tackle these roadblocks through effective strategies at the local, provincial, and national levels. That also includes addressing the widespread of gender based violence to increase the participation of women in politics.



## Panel on Municipal Leadership on Anti-Poverty Strategies Workshop

At this workshop we looked at three communities that have implemented poverty reduction strategies. We heard from speakers from the City of Edmonton, City of Toronto, and City of Thunder Bay.

### Kate Gunn: End Poverty Edmonton Task Force

The Task Force was created in 2014. It was a high profile group that existed for one year and consisted of 22 people. One key aspect of the task force was on engaging citizens throughout the process. It was achieved by consulting with 300,000 Edmontonians about ways to eliminate poverty as well as examining attitudes about poverty. The task force resulted in a five year roadmap and implementation strategy with 35 actions identified.

The strategy looked at poverty through different lenses:

1. Human Rights lens
  - Acknowledging that the task force was about the process, not just the legislation that came out of the process
  - Shift in mentality from looking at poverty as a charity model to a human rights approach
    - Out of the 35 actions in the implementation report, 8 of them refer to actions relating to human rights
  - An important focus was on decriminalizing poverty
  - Emphasis was made on finding ways to make it easier for people to participate in the democratic process of voting, making city services more affordable, and eliminating racism
2. Reconciliation lens
  - Created an aboriginal roundtable that informed the Task Force on the impact of poverty on Aboriginal populations

Over the five year implementation of the strategy, Edmonton is focusing on six game changers that will make the most difference to people living in poverty:

**SIX GAME CHANGERS**

Research indicates that there are six key areas of actions that will make a significant difference to individuals and families struggling with poverty:

1. ELIMINATE RACISM
2. LIVABLE INCOMES
3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING
4. ACCESSIBLE & AFFORDABLE TRANSIT
5. AFFORDABLE & QUALITY CHILD CARE
6. ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES & ADDICTIONS SUPPORTS

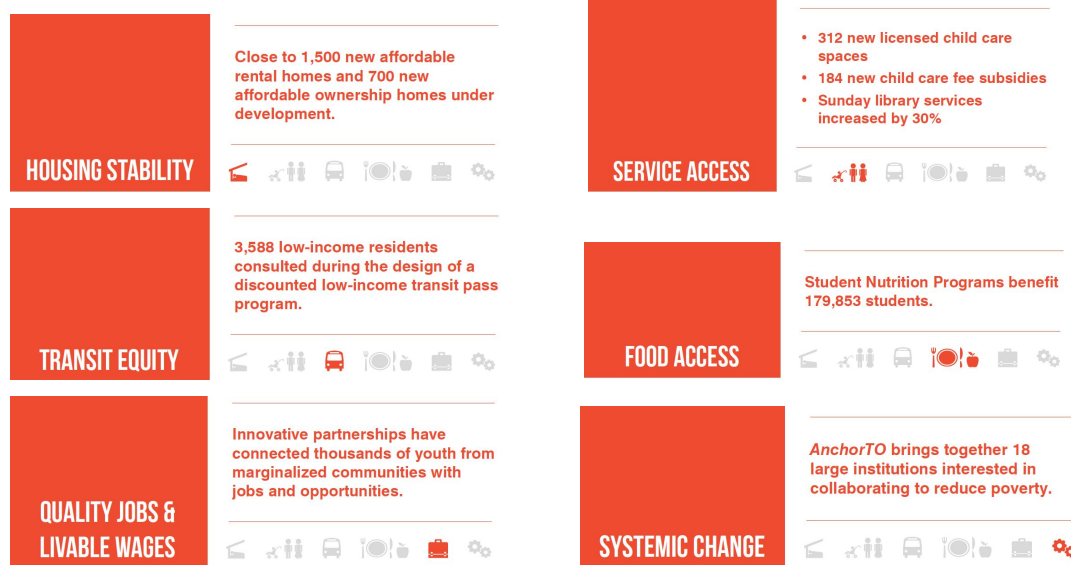
## Denise Campbell: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

In 2015 the City of Toronto unanimously approved the *TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy*. The strategy is a 20 year poverty reduction plan that recognizes that the biggest threat to Toronto is social and economic inequality. It recognizes the need for systemic change on the complex issue of poverty because traditional paths to prosperity have been broken.

- For more info on TO Prosperity:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=a67aa457bc09a510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

The process of making the strategy was completed in one year and it has six areas of focus:



- Full report: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-98562.pdf>

## Cythia Olse: Building a Better Thunder Bay For All: A Community Action Plan to Reduce Poverty

The strategy started with a committee that was formed in 2013 and the actions of the strategy are being implemented until this day. At the time the strategy was created, 15,000 people lived in poverty in Thunder Bay. Initiatives in the strategy include short, medium and long term solutions and people with lived experiences of poverty have had input on policies throughout the creation and implementation of the strategy. The strategy focuses on four pillars:

- Housing
- Income & Community Economic Development
- Inclusion
  - Student ambassador program where students volunteer their time to assist with community events





- The city created an ID bank for homeless residents to make it easier for them to access government services
- Engagement and Infrastructure
  - Focused on eliminating racism by starting a Walk A Mile Film Project which is a film series to educate citizens about poverty

#### Workshop Takeaways:

While we saw that different cities have different strategies to address the complex issue of poverty, each city took a holistic and innovative approach to examine this issue in their community. This included looking at factors such as accessibility to transit, childcare, housing, procurement policies, and making it easier for residents to access government services. Each of the cities had structured and facilitated process to narrow down from the many ideas that came forward to focused priorities. All three cities included the voices of people living with poverty from the beginning and throughout the process, not just asking for input at the end. This is an important shift that I believe has made these cities successful in addressing and reducing poverty in their communities. One comment that was made by a panelist also pointed out that engagement and buy-in from staff and politicians was just as important to the success of the strategy as it was to have community buy-in. Panelists also pointed out that it was important to have an annual work plan focusing on things the city wants to achieve each year and have an annual progress report to see what has achieved in a specific year. It was clear that municipalities need to have an evaluation plan to ensure that the city is on track and is meeting the goals of the strategy.

## Breakfast Fundraiser: FCM Women in Municipal Government Scholarships



This breakfast was sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress in recognition and celebration of women in municipal politics. We heard personal and inspiring stories of women in public service and how they've navigated and overcome systemic barriers over the years.

We talked about things that would increase women's participation in municipal politics, like ensuring municipalities have policies around mat leave and child care. All proceeds from this fundraiser go towards supporting emerging female leaders in communities across Canada. It was a really good experience to participate in this fundraiser and to connect with women across Canada around this issue; it also left me with a lot of food for thought.

Respectfully submitted,  
Councillor Olga Liberchuk